

Making Community Connections through Innovative Food Practices

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Muncie is no stranger to food insecurity. While many of the larger problems relate to the ability to obtain nutritious and affordable food, a general lack of education as it relates to healthy eating underlies this larger issue. Outreach groups can get food to community members, but that does not mean community members will know how to prepare and consume it to receive maximum nutritional value. Food education must be the next step to ensure Muncie community members are receiving adequate nutrition. Looking at one demographic in general, this project seeks to engage Muncie's over 65 population in collective food education programmed in a way to foster relationships among participants. Partnering with Sustainable Muncie and their MADJAX location, this projects looks at the specific needs of the community and culminates with a letter of intent submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation *Pioneering Ideas* Grant aimed at the construction and maintenance of a commercial kitchen space retrofitted for daily programming of food education for Muncie's aging population.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Jane Ellery for her continued dedication to community health and sustainability. Her grant writing expertise was invaluable to this project and her genuine interest in the student learning process helped me truly understand the process of grant proposals and the larger nonprofit field.

I would also like to thank my support system both at school and at home for showing me that I truly can make a difference through community work.

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Process Analysis Statement

Rational for Thesis topic

I entered college as a political science major for no particular reason. High school government held my interest as much as any other class, but I didn't have the clandestine moment when I knew that politics was the career path for me. My choice to study the public sector came because I did not know what exactly what I wanted for a career, just that I knew I needed to help people as a profession. Political science seemed like the right fit to me and with my previous experience working with nonprofits I saw they had much more to offer than many of my peers once thought. A class in the political science department titled 'public administration' showed me all that nonprofits had to offer. I was also exposed to so many unique nonprofits during my semester abroad in Costa Rica. Many of the nonprofits in the country focused on the intersectionality between environmental and social solutions to the country's major issues. The hands-on experience I gained during this time helped me to decide working with a nonprofit as a component of my thesis would give me an understanding of this sector and equip me with skills I knew I could use in any job field I may find myself in someday.

After getting plugged in with the MADJAX community and sharing my passion for finding solutions to food related sustainability issues I began the complex process of nonprofit grant application. Had it not have been for the unique people I met along the way, or the tools available to this community in regard to financial assistance, this project would not have been possible. I hope what follows can serve as a guide for any student in the future interested in learning more about the grant application process, especially in regard to how it looks in the greater Muncie area. However, this can only show my experience and the process for helping to secure grant funding for an organization is as unique as the organization itself.

Nonprofit Selection

Owned and operated by the 501(c)3 nonprofit Sustainable Muncie, the MADJAX facility is a makerforce space located in Downtown Muncie at the corner of Jackson and Madison Street. Sustainable Muncie has been in operation for over three years and has adopted a set of bylaws and board government structure. Actively supporting the efforts of six private sector and non-profit tenants, the foundational role of the organization is to create conditions, spaces, relationships, collaborations and connections for an array of community groups and organizations to locate physically in the MADJAX makerspace facility and expand their operations. A ‘makerspace’ was a term I had heard before in previous nonprofit work, but I was unsure of the exact definition of the word. A makerspace is a kind of catch all to describe a place where people can gather to create. The broadness of the term is intentional and helps create a space for nontraditional forms of art. The MADJAX space is located in an old Cintas warehouse and the building has tenants in the space, including a print shop, a brewery and a co-lab space. The overall mission is “to foster a collaborative environment wherein people can explore and create intersections between science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics and culture” (“About Us - Madjax,” 2019). One unique feature of a makerspace is the connections between art and technology and the MADJAX space intentionally works with local K-12 students to introduce them to STEM education. The MADJAX facility was the best place to tackle issues of food insecurity in the Muncie area.

Early efforts

After my initial meeting with Jane Ellery, my thesis advisor, in the fall I began to construct my narrative of the greatest challenges facing the community. This research would eventually culminate in the document titled “statement of need.” The choice to begin with this

document was intentional, as doing in-depth research into the communities most pressing issues would reveal how receiving grant maker funding could have the most positive impact on the community. This study began by looking at some of the most demanding problems, such as food insecurity and its prevalence in certain demographics in the area. Rather than strategizing an approach that would only address some of the surface level issues, this research would help me to understand the roots of the problem.

The model of my need's assessment came from guidance I received at weekly meetings with a group titled "The Grant Writer's Guild." We met once a week, and the team was composed of myself, Jane, and Kyra, a community member with experience in the grant writing process. Kyra had written a grant for the local Upward Bound program and received funding for the initiative. She was able to show me websites such as the "Community Health Alliance of Muncie and Delaware County" and "Kids Count" to study community data and trends in some of the most important health indicators. The most important things I learned from these websites was how to convey trends to show that conditions are deteriorating over a given period. The part of the needs assessment I found to be the most important is framing community conditions in the larger global context by looking at global initiatives, such as the UN Sustainable Development goals. By taking such a tight lens on the Muncie community but framing the issues here as impactful on the global society it helps grant makers better understand the community. Grant makers who might not be familiar with Muncie specifically but know of issues such as food insecurity that are afflicting areas all over the world. Kyra and her expertise with needs assessments is just one of the people I was fortunate enough to interact with during this process. Several other community members and Ball State University faculty were so influential in helping me create my grant proposal.

Key Contacts

When it comes to sustainability and nonprofit funding, I was told there is no better person to talk to at Ball State University than Donna Browne. Browne is a grant writer for the Center for Energy Research/Education/Service and through my work with this office I have become more familiar with Donna and the work this office does for sustainability. With her experience with grant writing Jane and I thought she would make an excellent first stop to learn more about potential funding sources for this grant proposal. After explaining a little bit about our proposal idea she started listing all kinds of organizations we should reach out to for this initiative. Her list ranged from local to federal and even some private corporations who were known to fund projects similar to ours. She also brought forth some critical questions I had not considered before, which helped me to think more analytically about our idea and how we can “sell it” to potential donors. Our initial budget for the project seemed a little large, so we discussed breaking the project up into smaller sections to make the donation seem more feasible, and to start a potential relationship with a donor. Overall she seemed really excited about our project and even offered to come onboard to assist with whatever we thought we might need her for.

During the meeting Jane also mentioned a relationship with the health department, which is an area I was completely unfamiliar with. Although health code regulation varies from county to county, familiarizing myself with Delaware County’s regulations will give me the tools to adapt in the future accordingly. Jane also told us that Delaware County lies in an “opportunity zone.” This is a new term coined under the Trump administration, and offers some major tax advantages to corporations looking to donate to community development inside of these “opportunity zones.” This is definitely an advantage to our project, a tool we used to find a donor and show them the value of investing in our food sustainability program. As a final takeaway,

Donna directed us to the Maring-Hunt library, suggesting we make an appointment to use their foundation directory online service to learn more about the organizations she suggested as potential funding sources. In addition, we decided it is critical moving forward to set a clear list of goals and objectives to target donors that will be a good match for our project proposal (Browne, D. 2019, January 16. Personal interview).

Along with the invaluable list she provided us with, Browne also provided some local contact she also thought might be able to help us. Since we will be working with food, she suggested we reach out to Josh Gruver, a Ball State professor who is working to create his own “mobile market.” His relationship to food sustainability would make him a valuable contact to reach out to as this project progresses. Although his project focuses more about getting fresh fruits and vegetables to the Muncie community he provided me with solid advice about how to approach food education in the community.

With the advice of Donna Browne in mind I attended the Purdue Extension – Delaware County annual meeting on February 5th, 2018 where Josh Gruver was the keynote speaker. Josh spoke about his work with the Muncie Food Hub and his approach to tackle some of the same food insecurity issues I was looking at for my grant application. This meeting proved to be a great networking opportunity and the following week I was able to sit down with Gruver and discuss the project more in depth. Gruver has worked with the University to create the Mobile Food Market. Operating in the summer months, the truck receives fruits and vegetables from local producers. Once the produce is collected the truck makes scheduled stops in the areas of Muncie that have been deemed the most vulnerable to food insecurity. From my conversation with him I was able to learn more about attitudes from participants about how food security initiatives are perceived. Efforts can be made with the best intentions but if the target

beneficiaries are unable or unwilling to accept the programming the program will not be successful. Though Josh's program goals differ slightly from my own, his advice about truly understanding a community before addressing perceived issues will result in more long-term success for the nonprofit. Gruver, J. 2019, February 14. Personal interview).

Although much of the grant writing for a nonprofit is done by leadership in the organization, in the field of grant work there are professional free-lance grant writers. These individuals work with nonprofits who may be less familiar with the complex process of grant writing in assisting them in constructing applications. I had the privilege of sitting down with a free-lance grant writer Amy Shankland and speak with her a little more about her experience with grant writing. Amy Shankland is the CEO of Grants Avenue LLC and one tip she gave me was the importance of creating a narrative when writing the statement of need, for example speaking with someone from the target beneficiary group. By listening to their story and adding it to the narrative we can better portray the needs of the local community. Meeting with Amy Shankland reinforced the idea to me that you truly need to understand your target demographic before you can make strides in addressing their most pressing issues. She spoke to me a lot about her work with nonprofits and even was gracious enough to share with me her outline for a letter of intent (included below). This outline was close to what I followed to create my final thesis, as her model is very similar to what was being asked from me by the grant maker selected. Each grant maker created their own checklist of information they need from a given nonprofit, but in general her model covers most of the questions asked by each nonprofit. To choose the grant maker best fit for Sustainable Muncie we visited the local Maring-Hunt library to access grant databases (Shankland, A. 2018, October 12. Personal interview).

DATE

Dear GRANT MAKER:

Thank you for this opportunity to share our impact on XYZ. We are emailing this letter of inquiry to summarize one of our most critical needs as the first step towards submitting a full grant proposal to your foundation.

Needs Statement:

About Organization:

Timeline and Summary of Project:

Program Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Project Steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Project Partners:

Success Measurements:

1. Records of ...
2. ...volunteer evaluations.
3. ...pre and post test results.

Resources Needed:

Staff member, training and evaluation materials, etc.

Project Budget:

If you'd like to learn more, we would be happy to submit a full proposal and welcome anyone from your foundation to come to our office for a site visit. We appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

NAME

Maring Hunt Library

Any nonprofit applying for grant money needs to have a meeting with Laura Janiga about the database resources available through the Maring-Hunt library. At my first meeting she gave me a packet covering all the basics of grant research. I could tell from her presentation that she was worked with everything from well-established 501(c)3's to nonprofits just getting started. Since Muncie is a community rich with active nonprofits, the "foundation directory online" is an essential resource to keep these nonprofits funded. Laura showed us how to access the site, as well as other resources within the site that we could use to better find funders for our project. One of the first things she gave us was a worksheet that helped facilitate the initial brainstorming process, including a section where we were asked to list key buzzwords that may be on applications for grants. I learned that was most important was to tailor our word choice to help fit into the needs of a grant application. For example, if our kitchen is designed to help the aging population learn food skill, a grant maker might consider this "continuing education for elderly community members" and by including their words in our search I would be better able to find a match. One of the most helpful things that Laura did was to show us a real example of how to use the database. She pulled up the grant maker Eli Lily and showed us where we could find key information about this organization, such as their funding priorities and how much money they give in an average grant. She also showed us how we can download this information into a digestible PDF and save it for later. The Foundation Directory Online is such a great resource because it can help me learn more about some of the most common Grant makers in the area, such as the Ball Brothers foundation, and the Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware county. The best part about the directory is that it can help me find more funding sources that I may have not known about.

The second resource that Laura showed us was the Indiana Philanthropy alliance. Although not as high tech as the directory, the alliance website shows resources that have a priority in funding projects in Indiana. This resource is just as valuable because my project comes from the need for more food security in the Muncie area so I feel as though donors will be more inclined due to the great need in this county. Throughout the semester I visited the Maring-Hunt library to collect a database of ten grant makers whose funding interests aligned with the goals of my project. Some were local funders, like the Ball Brothers Foundation while others were national grant makers like the Rockefeller Foundation. The biggest variation between the organizations was the funding available, which I took into consideration when choosing a funder. The other important aspect when choosing a funder is the value of establishing a relationship with the organization before application. There are several different ways to go about establishing a relationship, reaching out the organization or applying and reapplying to grants so the organization becomes familiar with your organization's mission. The value of establishing the relationship is what inevitably led us to choosing the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, because of the relationship Sustainable Muncie had started with this foundation.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

After selecting the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, I took time to study the organization to learn more about their mission and goals as a grant maker. I compiled my research into a brief paragraph, outlining the goals and objectives of the foundation as well as a study of a project the funded in the past with similar goals as my own project.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is a largest philanthropy in the United States focused entirely on health. Listed clearly on their website, their mission statement is "our guiding principles serve as our commitment to continue working passionately toward improved health

and health care for everyone in America.” This foundation was built from the founding member of the Johnson & Johnson, which is why the foundation has made its priority to create a ‘culture of health’. Last year they distributed \$365,245,000 to a variety of nonprofits within the fields of health, education and community and economic development (“Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,” n.d.). As a philanthropic organization devoted to community health, this organization fits really well within our framework of our project in the MADJAX makerspace. Sustainable Muncie has applied to the foundation in the past and one of the most important things in the grant application process in building a relationship with grant makers. By submitting grant proposals, even if they are not accepted by a foundation, begins the process of opening the door to future acceptance. Several of their open funding opportunities lined up with our goals, but in the end, we chose the “Pioneering Ideas: Open Call.” The core value of this grant is for applicants to “Challenge assumptions or long-held cultural practices.” Our kitchen space dedicated to helping the Muncie aging population learn new skills in the kitchen will be the perfect place to challenge cultural practices. Looking at the request for proposal page, one of the elements that will make our proposal competitive is that we are situated in a maker’s space. This means that we are able to look creatively at cooking and use resources in our facility to rethink the way we think about community health. A previously funded project from this grant is a space called ‘MakerNurse.’ “The MakerNurse program honors nurses' inventive spirit by bringing nurse "maker spaces" to the forefront of health care.” This funded project brought medical equipment to hospitals and gave nurses a creative space to work with this equipment to look for creative solutions (“MakerNurse - RWJF,” n.d.). Challenging the way nurses think about traditional health care, this project truly is pioneering. Looking at this funded project helped us to tailor the goals and objectives of our project.

Looking Forward

Compiling the necessary documents for the Robert Wood Johnson foundation grant application is a skill I intend to use in my future career path. I intend to continue to work nonprofits as I have worked for nonprofits throughout high school and college. From these experiences I have learned about the difference they can make in the community. Although the mission statement of nonprofits may vary, they all intend to bring about positive change. Much of the funding for these organizations comes from private donations supplemented with grant acquisitions. The skill of composing a grant application to secure funding is something that nonprofits have to be familiar with and many are looking for individuals with these skills. The hands-on experience gained from this project has equipped me with the know how to apply for future grants at different nonprofits.

The biggest theme throughout my conversations with people involved with nonprofits is the value of understanding a community before beginning work. With a scarcity of resources for helping subjugated populations, studying the population and speaking with community members will create the most efficient solutions. Before beginning this project, I knew very little about the food scarcity issues in the Muncie community and was unaware of the lack of food education available in the area. Through my work I was able to take do an in-depth study learning more about the health effects of low food literacy and poor nutrition. The preemptive research helped to create the best plan to address some of these issues in a way that would be engaging for the community. Engaging the community is one of the most important aspects to keep in mind when creating programming through nonprofit work. The skills gained from this study have given me the confidence that no matter the community or nonprofit I will be in someday I have the tools to help create positive change.

Making Community Connections through Innovative Food Practices

This document is the culmination of the processes followed to create a full grant proposal submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to their Pioneering Grant callout. The documents included below are the full grant proposal, including a budget worksheet as well as the budget narrative. Followed by an uploaded copy of the proposal submitted to the Foundation submitted on April 9th, 2019. A database of grant makers who list grants on their websites, selected based on funding priorities that may be utilized by MADJAX in the future for funding opportunities. The final document is the Muncie and Delaware County statement of need which includes extensive data of food insecurity issues in the area. Before each section is a short paragraph with a guide on how to read the section as well as background information useful to understanding the content that follows.

Full Proposal

The full written grant proposal was created with the intention of addressing the questions listed on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation page for their Pioneering grant. This grant was created with the goals of funding projects that “explore the potential for emerging trends to impact our ability to build a Culture of Health.” The objective of the grant is to address a problem in the local community in new and innovative ways, finding creative solutions to complex problems. This document may be used in the future if the initial letter of intent is accepted and follow up information is needed from the Foundation. The budget narrative outlines how the funding from the foundation would be utilized throughout the duration of the program. This document was also used as the base to create the consolidated document submitted to the foundation.

Situation Statement

The value that comes from protecting our vulnerable populations can be seen in communities across the country, and as our community population age's engagement from this demographic can impact health outcomes. A case study worth noting is the cultural difference in life expectancy in Hispanic Americans. Although many Hispanic Americans have harsher jobs and less access to education and health services, their life expectancy is higher than many other cultural groups in America. This can be attributed to a number of factors, but most notably is their care for the elderly. The inherent sense of multigenerational care and stronger networks of social support leads to a greater life expectancy (Scommegna, 2013). In the US as adults' age, the prevalence of isolation increases, and reports indicate that the more isolated an individual becomes, the more likely they are to be exposed to a number of health risks. The likelihood of isolation begins as early as retirement, as men and women experience an expanded gap in their daily schedule that they may find difficult to fill with meaningful activities. The over 65 population in Delaware county makes up 17% of the total population as of 2017, which is higher than the US average ("Healthy Community Alliance Indicators: Population Over Age 65," 2018). Delaware county ranks in the worst 25th quartile for cases of depression in the Medicare population and these instances have been increasing significantly. 21 percent of all Medicare recipients in Delaware County have been diagnosed with depression, which is 5% higher than the US average ("Healthy Community Alliance Indicators: Depression: Medicare Population," 2015). Our project seeks to create meaningful work for Delaware County's over 65 population while increasing community cohesion among older adults. By engaging the aging population through creating a learning community around enhancing cooking skills, we will be able to

decrease the prevalence of isolation and poor nutrition among Delaware County's aging population.

Proposed Solution

Gathering a group of people together to prepare food serves as an opportunity to foster connections. Working together to chop fruit and vegetables can teach valuable skills, but the process can go beyond that. As a project that seeks to increase community cohesion among older adults through improvement of community members cooking skills, the support and funding of the Robert Wood Johnson foundation would help us build and maintain the programming of a commercial kitchen within our MADJAX makerforce site. This kitchen would be utilized daily under the supervision of a full time 'kitchen program coordinator' who would oversee the purchasing of food, weekly lesson planning and team building aimed at fostering relationships among Muncie's elders as well as integrating other aspects of maker space opportunities into the programming. The basic framework for the programming would include a weekly commitment from each group to gather for 3 to 4 hours to prepare a small snack for a local after school program, followed by the preparation of a dinner meal to take home or to enjoy on site with other group members. These dinners will be constructed with the intention of teaching new cooking skills, such as improvement of knife skills and ingredient matching and will also be well balanced in nature.

The multigenerational component of funding this kitchen fits well into the framework of creating a Culture of Health. By integrating snack preparation into the weekly program, we aim to not only foster positive relationships among older adults. But to also bridge the gap and facilitate connections to Muncie's youngest generation. Bridging this gap is key in creating a Culture of Health because the outcomes of multi-generational education can produce far more

successful results. As Muncie's youth is also representative of our vulnerable populations, providing them weekly with a healthy fruit or vegetable-based snack will not only help to meet their physical needs for adequate nutrition. This network will also alleviate a small portion of financial responsibility for the parents of these children.

Challenge to Conventional Thinking

Our target audience presents us with a unique opportunity to challenge conventional thinking. The kitchen space would be installed in our facility within the larger framework of a makerforce. Created with the mission to 'foster a collaborative environment wherein people can explore and create intersections between science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics and culture', resources are readily available to enrich the experience of the innovating food practices program. The kitchen space will be within the MADJAX facility which will impact the surrounding stakeholders in the space. The space itself will not interfere with any other tenants and will also serve as an opportunity space for collaboration among the program and other makers on site. By allowing participants to rethink the way they have traditionally thought of standard food practices through the use of technology and art, we create a more holistic approach to health. Not only thinking about the food we choose to eat, but also the way we prepare it can have an impact on the nutritional value of the meal. Another way to innovate food practice is incorporate the use of technology to preserve recipes for future use. Moving from traditional recipe cards, many people are now utilizing online blogs and other resources to present their favorite recipes to a larger audience. The use of technology has made recipes more accessible, allowing a larger collaborative network to challenge the way we've traditionally viewed food. However, older generations can easily be left out of the conversation because of the disparity in technological literacy.

Target of Opportunity

The first group benefitting from creating and utilizing a kitchen space is Muncie's aging population. Aimed at creating an environment for healthy aging, this program initially seeks to also provide Muncie's retired population with access to a meal once a week. Indiana falls into the highest category of adults aged 65+ who are currently obese ("Healthy Aging Data: Obesity | DPH | CDC," n.d.). Obesity can be attributed to irregular physical activity combined with poor eating habits. By providing, at minimum, one meal a week to participants in which the meal has been chosen to provide holistic nutrition, we can contribute to addressing the state's increasing obesity problem. The meal, however will provide more than just food to the group. It will also provide an educational experience so they may be able to take some of the information obtained and incorporate these new practices into their own food preparation at home. In addition to tactical skills, they will learn cognitive skills related to healthy substitutes that may not have been available at the time of their food education. The third, and most complex benefit gained from participation in the program is an increased sense of community. Aging adults, especially when faced with the loss of their partner, may be subject to loneliness. According to a recent study by the National Council on Aging, an estimated 17% of all Americans over the age of 65 are isolated because they live alone (*Framework for Isolation in Adults Over 50*, n.d.). This program aimed at providing nutrition skills, also seeks to foster a culture of community among some of Delaware County's retirees. Food and cultural identity go hand in hand, and learning to prepare foods will also help aging adults reconnect to their heritage and may help them to recall important moments in their lives in which food was prepared or consumed. The group that may benefit from this the most is members whose partners have passed away. Many of these members may not have the nutrition knowledge to be feeding themselves adequately but also are some of

the most vulnerable to isolation. A system of accountability and care will reduce feelings of loneliness among members.

Our interest in a multigenerational health initiative explores the effectiveness of regular meetings to reduce instances of loneliness in Muncie's aging population. Although rates of depression of adults ages 65 and over are higher in Delaware County, this program can serve as a model for other areas that may also seek to address this issue in their own community. The innovative food practices initiative model can be implemented into any community that wishes to tackle issues of isolation through the means of food education. From our exploration, stakeholders investing in building the a Culture of Health may study the direct decreases of respondents feeling of loneliness, as this is a topic that has very little data available. This model may be incorporated into nursing homes, senior centers or other areas concerned with aging demographics. Although this exploration is looking at aging populations, instances of isolation are not exclusive to this demographic and others may be interested in studying the effectiveness of this model with younger demographics. The scale of this model can grow to encompass other demographics or vulnerable populations.

The target beneficiaries for this project are twofold. By meeting a physical need, we hope to alleviate some of the problems associated with hunger for children in Delaware County. Benefits of a well-balanced diet for a child include better overall health, stabilized cognitive development, and improved school performance. When children receive better nutrition they are also able to better stabilize their mood ("Childhood Nutrition Facts | Healthy Schools | CDC," n.d.). An investment in child's nutrition at a young age can relate to overall decrease in health costs over time. The provision of afterschool snacks by our program will compliment many initiatives from the Center for Disease Control through its Healthy Schools division as well as

the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (“Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) | Healthy Schools | CDC,” n.d.). These sites outline healthy snack options for children, and this program will follow those guidelines to optimize nutrition of the snacks prepared for the afterschool program.

Budget Narrative

Beginning first with the staff that will be involved with this project, the organization is prepared to hire a full time Project Coordinator who will oversee the day to day operations of the project. The Project Coordinator will receive 45,000 a year plus 21% fringe benefits totaling \$163,350 for the first three years of the project. The roles of the project coordinator will include purchasing the food, making the connections with the after school program, serving as a voice for older adults, lesson planning and team, as well as coordinating other uses of the space. The coordinator will also have freedom within the role at starting initiatives that benefit the target audiences of this project. The second budget item in the personnel section is the Principle Investigator. This role is required to receive project funding from the Foundation, and for this project the principle investigator is Jane Ellery. She will be compensated for 10% of her time and for the three pilot years, totaling \$31,290. Her responsibilities will include publishing financial reports, moving the project forward, keeping the project on budget, and materializing visions and ideas.

The second largest portion of the budget will be allocated for the food purchased for the program. On average the budget allows for 40 dollars a day to feed 80 children as well as an additional 40 dollars a day to feed the retirees. We estimate that this program will operate for 50 weeks a year, allowing time around holidays for breaks. The actual total of food for each day may not end up at exactly at the 40 dollar mark, this is where careful attention to detail is needed

on the part of the project coordinator, to ensure if the food budget is exceeded in one day there needs to a cut back later in the week. The 40 dollars a day for each target group may be adjusted throughout the duration of the program's pilot period dependent on how close daily purchasing is to the allocated budget. In total, feeding the after-school program as well as the older adults for the first three years of the program will total around \$62,500, however this is the area of the project anticipated to have the most deviance. The other major direct cost within the project is the kitchen construction. After discussions with an Ivy tech program with a kitchen space similar to our vision, as well as prior experience in the MADJAX building, it is estimated that the four kitchen areas would cost around \$100,000 in total for construction. The project also has the ability to begin with just two kitchen spaces constructed so if the full space is not able to be funded, construction can still begin. Each kitchen station will be outfitted with a prep space, a stove/oven unit, a commercial refrigerator as well as access to the hvac system to allow for proper ventilation to the area.

The final budgeted area of the project is the annual space rental price. Since the kitchen space is located within the MADJAX facility the space will be expected to pay rent to hold the space. The space rental price for the project was calculated from the rent prices of the other tenants in the building. While the rent of the space for the three-year budgeted period is \$75,000 this price can be offset by the rental of the space to third parties for events. There has been a recent uptick of food truck presence in the Muncie area and owners have expressed interest in renting a space like this to host large event to bring more business to their trucks. Charging these food truck owners to rent the space can help generate revenue for the truck and help offset the cost of the MADJAX space rental.

Budget Worksheet

Notice: The line item represents the total amount requested for the first three years of the project.

Budget Item	Requested Amount
<i>Personnel</i>	
Project coordinator	\$163,350
Principle investigator	\$31,290
<i>Other Direct Costs</i>	
Food	\$62,500
Kitchen Construction	\$100,000
<i>Purchased Services</i>	
Space rental	\$75,000
<i>Indirect Costs</i>	
8% of total budget	\$34,571
Total	\$466,711.20

Grant Application with Letter of Intent

Submitted on April 9th, 2019 the grant application is representative of the first contact made with the Robert Wood Johnson foundation about our project bring innovative food education to Muncie's aging community. In addition to the basic contact information needed for future follow up, the grant application asked for a brief overview of the aims and objectives of the project, summarized into a concise letter of intent. The application also included a budget worksheet with estimates of total cost of the first three years of development. If the project is selected for a second-round review, this application will be expanded on to include the information in the full proposal such as the budget narrative.



Application ID: 82595

Applicant: Sustainable Muncie Corporation

Solicitation: Pioneering Ideas

Phase: 2019 Pioneering Ideas Brief Proposal

Title: Making Community Connections through Innovative Food Practices

Status: Submitted

Submitted on: Apr 9, 2019 02:44 PM ET

Submitted by: Jane Ellery

Pioneering Ideas

Applicant Organization *

Instruction:

Provide the following information about the applicant organization. Include the formal legal name of the organization that, if awarded, will receive grant funds. *If more than one organization intends to apply for funding, please provide information for only one organization at this time.*

Note: If the Applicant Organization is a college or university, include the appropriate School, Department or Unit.

You may use the "Select organization information" link below to facilitate the entry of data required below. If the information already exists in the GuideStar Exchange or from prior activity with RWJF, the fields below will become prepopulated with the required data. If that occurs, please be sure to proofread the prepopulated information to ensure that it is accurate and current. Feel free to edit as needed. [Use this link](#) to learn more about this feature. If, instead, you prefer to manually enter all the required information below, you may do so.

* Indicates required

Applicant Organization *

School/Department/Unit

Address *

Address (line 2)

City *

State / Territory *

Zip + 4-digit extension *

Pioneering Ideas

Project Director/Principal Investigator *

Instruction:

- To save your partially completed page, scroll to the bottom of this page and select "Save, continue editing" or "Save, return home".
- If the Project Director/Principal Investigator's organization is a college or university, include the appropriate School, Department or Unit.

You may use the "Select contact information" link below to facilitate the entry of data required below. If the information already exists in the GuideStar Exchange or from prior activity with RWJF, the fields below will become prepopulated with the required data. If that occurs, please be sure to proofread the prepopulated information to ensure that it is accurate and current. Feel free to edit as needed. [Use this link](#) to learn more about this feature. If, instead, you prefer to manually enter all the required information below, you may do so.

Project Director/Principal Investigator *

This is the person with the responsibility for overseeing the project. This person will be the primary recipient of all key Foundation correspondence: copy of award notice, post-award financial and monitoring, and grant closure. If there is more than one project director/principal investigator, please provide information for only one at this time.

* Indicates required

E-mail *

Confirm E-mail *

Prefix *

First Name *

Middle Name

Last Name *

Suffix

Degree(s)

PhD Public Health

Organization *

Sustainable Muncie Corporation

Position *

President

School/Department/Unit

Address *

515 East Main Street

Address (line 2)

City *

Muncie

County *

Indiana

State / Territory *

Indiana

Zip or Postal Code *

47305

Office Phone Number *

765-702-3746

Phone Extn

Cell Phone Number

Pioneering Ideas

Project Title and Summary Information

Instruction:

Provide the following information specific to the proposed project.

- Project Title (maximum 150 characters)
- Requested Amount
- Proposed Start Date
- Duration
- Project Summary

Note: Due to the multi-phase nature of the *Pioneering Ideas* funding opportunity, projects are unlikely to start earlier than 16 weeks from date of brief proposal submission.

* Indicates required

Project Title *

Making Community Connections through Innovative Food Practices

Requested Amount \$ *

470,000

Proposed Start Date *

09/01/2019

Duration *

36 months

Project Summary *

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation seeks to discover, explore, and learn from novel ideas and emerging social, cultural, scientific, and technological trends. Through the Pioneering Ideas funding opportunity, we seek to engage pioneers in our work to build a Culture of Health in the United States and provide cutting-edge thinking that we can apply to the Foundation's [four focus areas](#) and the cross-cutting goal of achieving health equity.

Briefly describe your project, using the following questions as a guide:

WHAT

- What are the goals of the proposed work? Is there a hypothesis you seek to test or a problem your project will help solve?
-

HOW

- How would you use RWJF funding to accomplish these goals? What are the proposed project activities?
- How might your proposed project contribute to or fit into a larger vision for the future? How might your project, and the larger vision, inspire or inform progress toward a Culture of Health?
- How might your proposed project challenge conventional thinking and/or contribute new ideas to the Foundation's efforts to build a Culture of Health?
- How will your proposed work address and advance health equity?

WHO

- Who is(are) the target audience(s) for your work?
- What key stakeholders will your proposed project impact or influence?
- What populations or communities are impacted by the problem you seek to address? How do/ will they inform your work?
- Who will contribute to this project (key partners or advisors)?

WHERE

- What locations (either specific places or types of places) are impacted by your proposed work?

NOVELTY/LEARNING POTENTIAL

- Whether or not your project proves successful, what might those seeking to build a Culture of Health in the United States expect to learn from your exploration?
- How and to whom do you plan to disseminate the lessons learned from your project?

NON-RWJF FUNDING

- Have you received, or will you be receiving non-RWJF funding? If so, please include the amount and source of funding.

Note: You may **not** embed links to additional resources or include any attachments at this phase of the proposal process.

Please respond in the space below using a maximum of 7,500 characters, including spaces.

Situation Statement

The value that comes from protecting our vulnerable populations can be seen in communities across the country, and as our community population ages, engagement from this demographic can impact health outcomes. In the US as adults' age, the prevalence of isolation increases, and reports indicate that the more isolated an individual becomes, the more likely they are to be exposed to a number of health risks. The over 65 population in Delaware county makes up 17% of the total population as of 2017, which is higher than the US average ("Healthy Community Alliance Indicators: Population Over Age 65," 2018). 21 percent of all Medicare recipients in Delaware County have been diagnosed with depression, which is 5% higher than the US average ("Healthy Community Alliance Indicators: Depression: Medicare Population," 2015). Our project seeks to create meaningful work for Delaware County's over 65 population while increasing community cohesion among older adults. By engaging the aging population through creating a learning community around enhancing cooking skills, we will be able to decrease the prevalence of isolation and poor nutrition among Delaware County's aging population.

Proposed Solution

Gathering a group of people together to prepare food serves as an opportunity to foster connections. Working together to chop fruit and vegetables can teach valuable skills, but the process can go beyond that. As a project that seeks to increase community cohesion among older adults through improvement of community members cooking skills, the support and funding of the Robert Wood Johnson foundation would help us build and maintain the programming of a commercial kitchen within our MADJAX Makerspace site. This kitchen would be utilized daily under the supervision of a full time 'kitchen program coordinator' who would oversee the all daily operations of the space and program. The basic framework for the programming would include a weekly commitment from each group to gather for 3 to 4 hours to prepare a small snack for a local after school program, followed by the preparation of a dinner meal to take home or to enjoy on site with other group members. These dinners will be constructed with the intention of teaching new cooking skills, such as improvement of knife skills and ingredient matching and will also be well balanced in nature.

The multigenerational component of funding this kitchen fits well into the framework of creating a Culture of Health. By integrating snack preparation into the weekly program, we aim to bridge the gap and facilitate connections to Muncie's youngest generation. Bridging this gap is key in creating a Culture of Health because the outcomes of multi-generational education can produce far more successful results. As Muncie's youth is also representative of our vulnerable populations, providing them weekly with a healthy fruit or vegetable-based snack will not only help to meet their physical needs for adequate nutrition. This network will also alleviate a small portion of financial responsibility for the parents of these children.

Challenge to Conventional Thinking

Our target audience presents us with a unique opportunity to challenge conventional thinking. The kitchen space would be installed in our facility within the larger framework of a makerspace. The kitchen space will be within the MADJAX facility which will impact the surrounding stakeholders in the space. The space itself will not interfere with any other tenants and will also serve as an opportunity space for collaboration among the program and other makers on site. By allowing participants to rethink the way they have traditionally thought of standard food practices through the use of technology and art, we create a more holistic approach to health. Another way to innovate food practice is incorporate the use of technology to preserve recipes for future use. Moving from traditional recipe cards, many people are now utilizing online blogs and other resources to present their favorite recipes to a larger audience. The use of technology has made recipes more accessible, allowing a larger collaborative network to challenge the way we've traditionally viewed food. However, older generations can easily be left out of the conversation because of the disparity in technological literacy.

Target of Opportunity

The first group benefitting from creating a kitchen space is Muncie's aging population. Aimed at creating an environment for healthy aging, this program initially seeks to provide Muncie's retired population with access to a meal once a week. Indiana falls into the highest category of adults aged 65+ who are currently obese ("Healthy Aging Data: Obesity | DPH | CDC," n.d.). By providing, at minimum, one meal a week to participants we can contribute to addressing the state's increasing obesity problem. The meal will also provide an educational experience so they may be able to take some of the information obtained and incorporate these new practices into their own food preparation at home. In addition to tactical skills, they will learn cognitive skills related to healthy substitutes that may not have been available at the time of their food education. The third, and most complex benefit gained from participation in the program is an increased sense of community. This program aimed at providing nutrition skills, also seeks to foster a culture of community among some of Delaware County's retirees. The group that may benefit from this the most is members whose partners have passed away. Many of these members may not have the nutrition knowledge to be feeding themselves adequately but also are some of the most vulnerable to isolation. A system of accountability and care will reduce feelings of loneliness among members.

Our interest in a multigenerational health initiative explores the effectiveness of regular meetings to reduce instances of loneliness in Muncie's aging population. This program can serve as a model for other areas that may also seek to address this issue in their own community. This model may be incorporated into nursing homes, senior centers or other areas concerned with aging demographics. The scale of this model can grow to encompass other demographics or vulnerable populations.

The target beneficiaries for this project are twofold. By meeting a physical need, we hope to alleviate some of the problems associated with hunger for children in Delaware County. Benefits of a well-balanced diet for a child include better overall health, stabilized cognitive development, and improved school performance. When children receive better nutrition they are also able to better stabilize their mood ("Childhood Nutrition Facts | Healthy Schools | CDC," n.d.). An investment in child's nutrition at a young age can relate to overall decrease in health costs over time. The provision of afterschool snacks by our program will compliment many initiatives from the Center for Disease Control through its Healthy Schools division as well as the USDA Food and Nutrition Service ("Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) | Healthy Schools | CDC," n.d.). These sites outline healthy snack options for children, and this program will follow those guidelines to optimize nutrition of the snacks prepared for the afterschool program.

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Project Information Questions*

Instruction:

As appropriate, provide responses to the following questions.

* Indicates required

1. Have you applied for RWJF funding in the past?*

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

2. Have you applied for RWJF funding through the Pioneering Ideas Brief Proposal funding opportunity in the past?*

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

3. Which of the following BEST describes your organization?*

- ☐ Government entity
☐ State university
☒ Not-for-profit that is tax exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3)
☐ Not-for-profit that is tax exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(4)
☐ For-profit entity
☐ Private foundation
☐ Type III supporting organization
☐ Other (please specify)

4. How did you hear about the Pioneering Ideas Brief Proposal?*

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Conference
☐ Email
☐ Social media
☒ Website
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Other (please specify below)
-

Pioneering Ideas

Brief Proposal Budget and Definitions *

* Indicates required

i Instruction:

An important component of your brief proposal is the preparation of an initial budget. Please complete every field using your best judgment when projecting program expenses.

Definitions

- **Personnel** - salary and fringe costs.
 - **Other Direct Costs** - office operations, communications/marketing, travel, meeting expenses and project space.
 - **Purchased Services** - consultants and/or contract costs.
 - **Indirect Costs** - administrative expenses related to overall operations. The Foundation's approved rate for Indirect Costs is 12% of Personnel, Other Direct Costs and Purchased Services. When Purchased Services total more than 33% of the RWJF portion of a budget, the Foundation limits indirect costs on the Purchased Services category to 4%.
-

Duration 36 months **Project Total** \$470,000

From the Project Title & Summary Information section.

Requested Budget

	Amount	
Personnel	195,000	
Other Direct Costs	165,200	
Purchased Services	75,000	
Indirect Costs	34,800	
Total	470,000	

Database of Grant Opportunities

In order to choose a grant maker that best suits the needs of this project, a database was compiled to include ten grant makers whose missions aligned with the goals of this project. The majority of the funders listed below were found using the Foundation Directory online, accessed at the Maring-Hunt public library. Those grants not found in the Directory were listed on the Pivot website, whose access was provided by the University Sponsored Projects Administration.

	Funding Priorities	Money available	Type of Grant	Core Values	Submission Deadline	Initial Approach	Link	Perception of fit	Total annual award
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation PIONEERING GRANT	1. Health 2. Education 3. Community and economic development	Most common amount: \$50,000	Independent Foundation	The foundation's mission is to improve the health and health care of all Americans. Its efforts focus on fostering environments that promote health and on improving how health care in America is delivered and paid for, and how well it does for patients and their families.	Rolling submission	Electronic brief proposal	www.rwjf.org	5/5	\$365,245,000 TOTAL GIVING
Lilly Foundation	1. Philanthropy 2. Health 3. Education	Most common amount: \$250	Company Sponsored Foundation	The foundation supports programs designed to improve patient outcomes and enhance quality of life. Special emphasis is directed toward programs designed to improve lives of people who lack the resources to obtain quality healthcare, with a focus on low and middle-income countries; and strengthen public education, with a focus on science and math education.	The foundation develops and initiates partnerships on specific areas of interest.	Unsolicited requests are currently not accepted.	www.lillyfoundation.org	4/5 Small grant awards, may be useful to reach out for supplies for the kitchen	\$27,644,642 TOTAL GIVING
MacArthur Foundation	1. Education 2. Environment 3. Information and Communication	Most common amount: 300,000	Independent Foundation	MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world's most pressing social challenges, including over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector.	Rolling submission	Letters of Inquiry (2 to 3 pages) and one-page summary	www.macfound.org	5/5 First instinct is that this grantmaker would be a very good fit	\$264,862,750 TOTAL GIVING
National Main St. Foundation	1. Human Services 2. Philanthropy 3. Community and economic development	Most common amount: \$6,000	Community foundation	The foundation is committed to assisting donors who wish to build charitable endowments to support the communities of Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington, and Wolcott, CT, helping to make each town a better community in which to live and work.	Mar. 31	Telephone	www.mainstreetfoundation.org	1/5 Location of funding priority is N/A	\$739,192
Supporting Just and Sustainable Communities	1. Community and Economic Development 2. Arts and Culture 3. Environment	Most common amount: \$100,000	Family Foundation	The foundation seeks to foster just and sustainable communities in the United States guided by principles of social justice and distinguished by healthy environments, strong local economies, and thriving cultures. The foundation focuses on three core areas: 1) Sustainable Environments; 2) Strong Local Economies; and 3) Thriving Cultures.	Rolling Submission	Online at foundation web site	www.surdna.org	3/5 Need more information about not funding "food production"	\$38,001,465 TOTAL GIVING
Ball Brother's foundation	1. Arts and Culture 2. Environment 3. Education	Most common amount: \$5,000	Family Foundation	Support for the environment, humanities and cultural programs, higher and other education, health and medical education, youth, and family and social services.	Letters of inquiry: Feb 15 and July 15	DONNA MUNCHEL Program Officer/Grants Manager	http://ballfdn.org/	4/5	\$7,250,087 TOTAL GIVING

The Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County, Inc.	1. Human services 2. Community and economic development 3. Education	Most common amount: \$10,000	Community Foundation	The foundation seeks to encourage philanthropy, assist donors in building and enduring source of charitable assets, and exercise leadership in directing resources to enhance the quality of life of the residents of Muncie and Delaware County, Indiana.	Jan.8, Apr. 10, July 10, Oct. 9 for the quarterly competitive grants; varies for others	Telephone	www.cfmdc.org	4/5 Sustainable Muncie has already developed a relationship with the Community Foundation	\$2,494,745 TOTAL GIVING
Fidelity Charitable	1. Education 2. Religion 3. Health 4. Human services	Most common amount: \$500	Public Charity	The fund makes donor-advised grants primarily to U.S. tax-exempt charitable organizations	Contributes only to pre-selected organizations; unsolicited requests for funds not considered or acknowledged		www.fidelitycharitable.org	1/5 The amount awarded is very small and they don't have an application process	\$3,764,811.98 6 TOTAL GIVING
Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, Inc.	1. Education 2. Health 3. Community and economic development	Most common amount: \$15,000	Independent Foundation	Support primarily for health care, the vitality of Indianapolis, sustainable employment as well as organizations historically supported by the foundation.	Rolling Submission	Telephone or letter of inquiry (2-3 pages)	www.rmff.org	4/5 The location of MADJAN does not fit within their funding area priority	\$7,809,137 TOTAL GIVING
AARP Foundation	1. Human Services 2. Public Safety 3. Human Rights	Most common amount: \$35,000	Public Charity	Operating at the intersection of collaboration, innovation, legal advocacy and grantmaking, we bring together industry, government, activists, and volunteers to forge practical approaches that pair brainpower with some serious willpower.	Varies		www.aarp.org/aarp-foundation	3/5 Smaller funding opportunities, but very specialized to our target recipient	\$76,058,878
Rockefeller Foundation	1. Community and economic development 2. Philanthropy 3. International Relations 4. Health	Most common amount: \$100,000	Independent Foundation	Operating both within the United States and around the world, the Rockefeller Foundation supports work that expands opportunity and strengthens resilience to social, economic, health and environmental challenges, affirming its pioneering philanthropic mission since 1913 to "promote the well-being" of humanity.	April 1 for Centennial Innovation Challenge	Online funding inquiry form	www.rockefellerfoundation.org	4/5 Their #1 funding priority is community development	\$150,502,426
The Kresge Foundation	1. Community and economic development 2. Arts and Culture 3. Philanthropy 4. Education	Most common amount: \$100,000	Independent Foundation	The foundation seeks to strengthen nonprofit organizations by catalyzing their growth, connecting them to their stakeholders, and challenging greater support through grants. The foundation believes that strong, sustainable, high capacity organizations are positioned to achieve their missions and strengthen communities. Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations operating in the fields of education, health and long-term care, human services, arts and humanities, public affairs, and science, nature, and the environment.	Varies	Online funding inquiry form. Some grant opportunities are by invitation only	kresge.org	4/5 They're headquarters are located in the Midwest	\$149,311,048

Needs Assessment

To justify an application to receive grant funding, a needs assessment was conducted to understand the challenges facing the target recipients of this program. Food security in the Muncie and surrounding Delaware county area was studied to determine the value adding a program such as this would add to the collective effort to address the problem. The needs assessment looks at general food insecurity issues in the community as well as the increased rates among the target demographics this project would engage.

MADJAX - Need for the project

The Sustainable Muncie Corporation is a 501(c)(3) Muncie-based organization made up of a nine-member board and one paid staff member, the Director of MADJAX Operations, who is responsible for all day to day operations in the MADJAX facility. Sustainable Muncie has been in operation for over three years and has adopted a set of bylaws and board government structure. Actively supporting the efforts of six private sector and non-profit tenants, the foundational role of the organization is to create conditions, spaces, relationships, collaborations and connections for an array of community groups and organizations to locate physically in the MADJAX Makerspace facility and expand their operations. Sustainable Muncie is the general facility manager and among its primary functions, is to build out spaces and work with organizations to not only occupy them, but to grow, expand and thrive in them. Sustainable Muncie will commit to administering, implementing, and maintaining the sustainability of MADJAX Makerspace project.

The MADJAX facility is a key player in the Muncie community, where is there is a great need for a central makers space for collaborative art, but MADJAX also provides a space for

local students to gain real life work experience learning applicable skills this community is sorely lacking. Muncie has a great need for food education and the MADJAX facility can be a pioneer of the type of education this community needs. Several recent events in the surrounding Delaware County have increased the need for educational kitchen space.

Recent Increase in Area Food Deserts

Our citizens are moving further and further away from what the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) defines as a sustainable diet. The UN FAO states “Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources” (“Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,” n.d.). Not only do we see communities all across our country lacking sustainable diets, it has become an issue in the Muncie community. In fact, Muncie is at a greater risk than many other communities. Citizens in our city do not have appropriate access to the proper fresh food in order to consume a sustainable diet. Many times they also have not been exposed to the proper experiences to help them realize what a sustainable diet even looks like. This can sometimes be categorized as living in food desert, faced every day with the reality of food scarcity.

An organization called Food Forward, which focuses on food rescue, breaks down exactly what food insecurity is. Food insecurity looks as follows; “a lack of access to enough good, healthy, and culturally appropriate food” (Food Forward, 2017). This can be broken down into four basic characteristics, enough, good, healthy, and culturally appropriate. This means that not only are people who do not get enough food experience food scarcity, but that people who do

not have access to healthy food can also experience food scarcity. According to the Healthy Community Alliance of Delaware County and its neighboring Blackford County:

“The accessibility, availability, and affordability of healthy and varied food options in the community increase the likelihood that residents will have a balanced and nutritious diet. Low-income and underserved areas often have limited numbers of stores that sell healthy foods. People living farther away from grocery stores are less likely to access healthy food options on a regular basis and thus more likely to consume foods which are readily available at convenience stores and fast food outlets.”

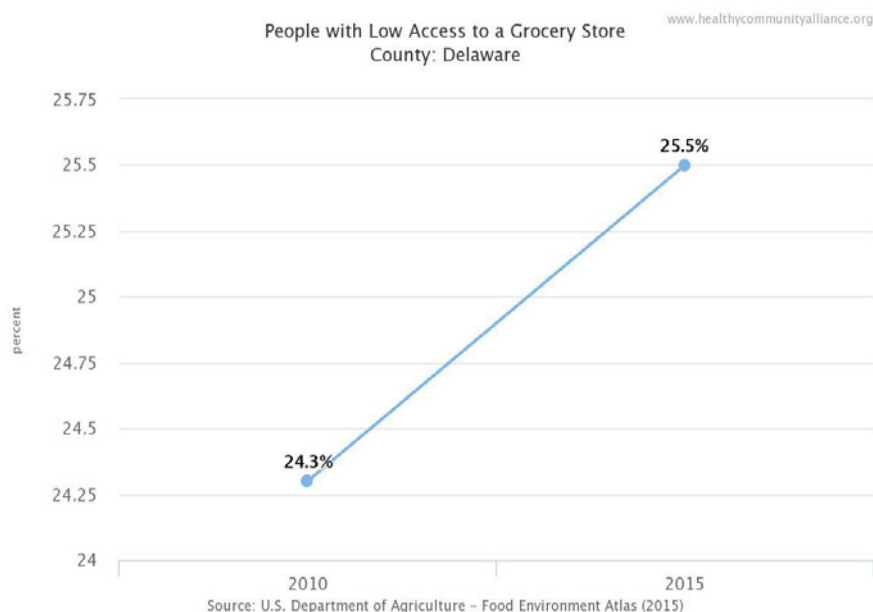
(“Healthy Community Alliance: Access to a Grocery Store,” 2015)

Looking specifically at the state of Indiana, Delaware county fits into the highest category of food insecurity (Healthy Community Alliance, 2018). Looking at a map we see much of the areas with higher rates of poverty not only fall in the city of Muncie but specifically we see a higher number concentrated in the downtown area. The star on the map located to the right denotes the MADJAX facility location.

Lack of Access to Meaningful Nutrition

According to the UN Sustainable development goals “Globally, one in nine people in the world today (815 million) are undernourished” (UN Sustainable Development Goal, n.d.). Aimed at eliminating hunger, this goal outlines the global issues we face in getting nutritious and sufficient food all year round to communities currently with this need. Muncie is no exception, and the community members lack the skills and knowledge to prepare healthy meals for themselves and their families. Although Muncie is located in an one of the United States’ top 10 agricultural producing states (“Which are the top 10 agricultural producing States?,” 2018), many of the people in this community lack variety in their diet. By eating a balanced diet filled

with a wide range of foods, it is easy to ensure adequate amounts of all essential nutrients are consumed. A lack of access to healthy foods is often a significant barrier to healthy eating habits. Low-income and underserved areas often have limited numbers of stores that sell ‘healthy’ foods. People living farther away from grocery stores are less likely to access healthy food



“Healthy Community Alliance: People with Low Access to a Grocery Store,” 2015

options on a regular basis and therefore more likely to consume foods which are readily available at convenience stores and fast food outlets (“Healthy Community Alliance: People with Low Access to a Grocery Store,” 2015).

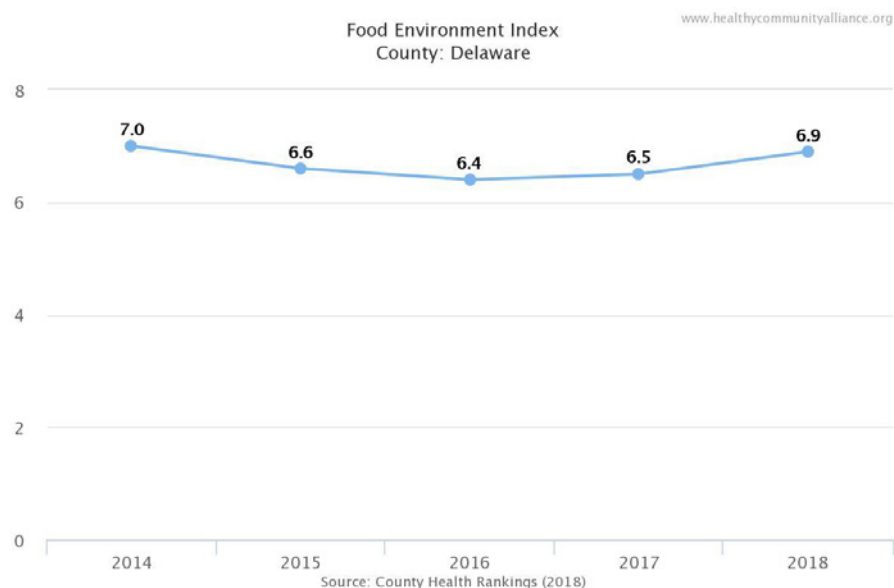
Although the trend is

decreasing, the number is not significant enough to represent a meaningful change in the Muncie food environment. Looking directly at the specific UN development goal, the MADJAX space has the opportunity to work towards the outlined goal “end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age”(“Goal 2: Zero Hunger” n.d.). The city of Muncie is in great need of a central location where community members can come and learn about proper nutrition. While there are facilities in this area that assist in making sure community members receive enough food, there is still a great deal of malnutrition in this area because of the lack of food education. Delaware County ranks in the worst percentile for counties in Indiana in terms of food environment. Many of the health

issues related to malnutrition outlined in the sustainable development goals are present in Delaware County, such as chronic health problems including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, hyperlipidemia, obesity, and mental health issues.

Child Nutrition and Education

Children are among the most vulnerable demographic when looking food demographics since many of the decisions made about what they eat are not made by them. This problem is exaggerated in areas where food insecurity is common. Looking at the US Kids Count website, Delaware county ranks higher than its neighboring Blackford County as well as significantly



higher than central Marion and Hamilton County in terms of food insecurity among children. Kids Count is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United

*“Healthy Community Alliance: Food Environment Index,”
2018*

States. By providing policymakers and

citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, Kids Count seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. Delaware also ranks in the top 10 counties in Indiana for child poverty rates and the second highest county in Indiana for child under 18 on the SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (*KIDS COUNT Data Book Collection - Indiana*, 2018). High child poverty rates have direct correlation

to the ability for a child to receive proper nutrition. When a child is unable to receive proper nutrition can affect many parts of their life, including their ability to succeed in the classroom. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a child's failure to eat fruits, vegetables and dairy products is associated with lower grades, while nutrient deficits, such as vitamins A, B6, B12, C, iron, zinc, folate and calcium, are linked to higher rates of absenteeism, tardiness and low grades (“Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) | CDC,” n.d.). These children are also 53% more likely to experience Asthma according to findings presented at the 2016 American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Annual Scientific Meeting. According to the presenter at the meeting “Fresh fruits and vegetables – not readily available in “food deserts” – are excellent sources of antioxidants, ... A diet rich in these foods can help to reduce potential airway stress and tissue damage caused by pro-inflammatory free radicals...” (“Children living in urban ‘food deserts’ at higher risk for asthma,” 2016). Referencing the food insecurity map, Indiana is above the US average and many of the negative health issues associated with food insecurity are prevalent in many Indiana communities. Looking globally, the UN believes in the mission of the meaningful nutrition as a means of improving community health and wellbeing. According to the UN site “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development” (“Goal 2: Zero Hunger” n.d.).

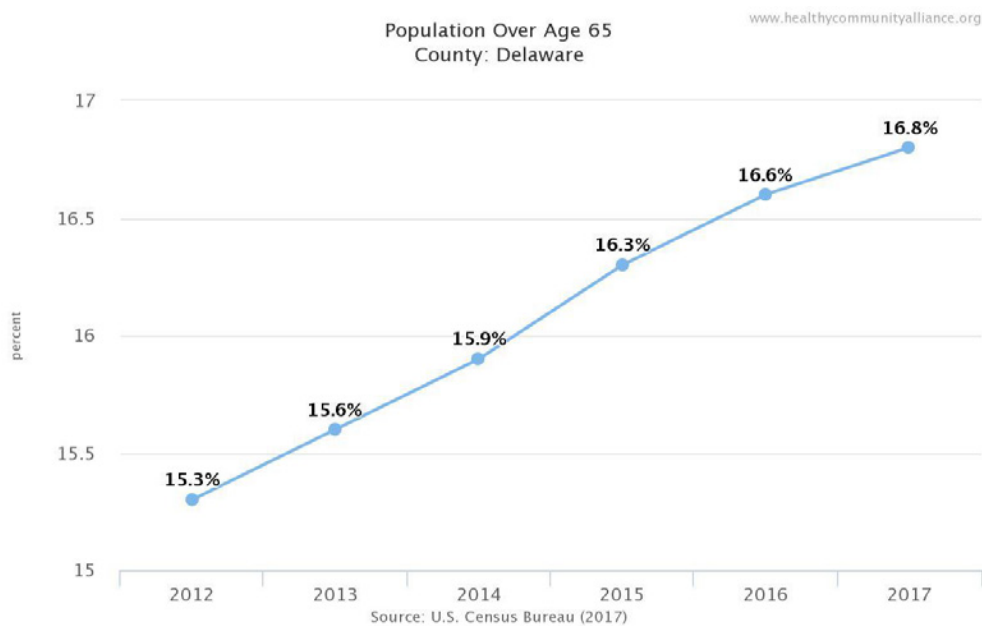
Child Poverty Rates: 2016			
10 Lowest Counties		10 Highest Counties	
Hamilton	4.9%	Grant	29.1%
Hendricks	6.7%	Marion	28.0%
Boone	7.7%	Switzerland	27.8%
Dubois	8.3%	Adams	26.7%
Hancock	8.8%	LaPorte	26.7%
Warrick	9.4%	Crawford	26.2%
Johnson	9.8%	Delaware	25.7%
Porter	9.9%	Lake	25.7%
Spencer	11.2%	Wayne	25.2%
Whitley	11.5%	Parke	25.1%

Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

“KIDS COUNT Data Book Collection - Indiana.” 2018

Aging Population and Food Issues

Another vulnerable population in the community is the elderly. As a person starts to age their nutrition becomes even more important. Without access to proper to nutrition they become susceptible to a variety of health issues. For example, according to SFGATE, “Nutritional problems in the elderly can cause a number of complications, including weakened immune systems, lowered energy levels and chronic health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis” (Morris, 2018). With the recent closing of



“Healthy Community Alliance: Population Over Age 65,” 2018

multiple grocery stores in the county, attention needs to be focused on securing proper nutrition for Muncie’s aging population. This becomes especially important when looking at the increase of community members that fit into the over age 65 category (“Population Over Age 65: Delaware County,” 2017). Muncie also has a larger population of citizens over 65 living alone. One third of all adult over 65 year olds live alone. Living alone should not be equated with being lonely or isolated, but many older people who live alone are vulnerable due to social isolation, poverty, disabilities, lack of access to care, or inadequate housing. This also means they are

responsible for their own nutrition and without proper education they can more easily become susceptible to the health issues related to malnutrition. Utilizing the MADJAX collaborative space to educate Muncie's aging population on complete nutrition provides the perfect opportunity to engage the community to provide more education about proper nutrition.

Conclusion

Muncie and the surrounding Delaware county area is a community in need of food education. Although there was a lack of education before 2017, this issue has been exaggerated since the national closing of all Marsh supermarkets, further distancing people from a sustainable diet. People are unable to access fresh fruits, vegetables and other foods that are key to a well-balanced diet, but the issue goes even beyond that. Alongside the numerous nonprofits in the area that focus on getting food in the hands of those who need it most, MADJAX wants to focus on the education that needs to come after. Utilizing the collaborative space to educate community members how to take food and create sustainable meals for themselves and their families. Food education has the potential to resolve many of the food related disparities present in the area. Currently, there are no spaces in the Muncie area where community members can meet and have a hands on experience working with food preparation and education. MADJAX seeks to provide that space and continue to be a community hub. With the installation of a commercial kitchen space with proper education resources available to the community, Muncie has an opportunity to bridge the food gap.

References

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